In memory of

**Leading Stoker
PETER GEORGE ALLOM
(British Empire Medal)**
20619, Royal Australian Navy
who died age 26
on 1 March 1942

Son of George and Edith Allom,
of Neutral Bay, New South Wales, Australia

Remembered with honour
PLYMOUTH NAVAL MEMORIAL

**Left: Leading Stoker Peter Allom**
**Middle: Able Seaman Hugh William Thompson**
**Right: Pay Lieutenant Alan Moreton Thompson**
**Photo courtesy of Brian Allom OAM, Tewantin**

Leading Stoker Peter George Allom the son of George William Allom and Edith Mary Isabel Allom (nee Corr) was born on 20th June 1915 at Tampin in the Malay States. He enlisted in the Royal Australian Navy on 10th December 1934 for a minimum engagement of 12 years of service and was allocated the service number of 20619. At the time of his enlistment he was 19 years and 5 months of age and single. His next-of-kin was shown as his mother, Edith Allom. His mother's address at the time of his enlistment is unreadable on his service document, however she is shown at various locations during his naval service. Some of the places she resided are: the Corr family home at 3 Philip Street, Toowoomba, and 1B Manns Avenue, Neutral Bay, Sydney, New South Wales. He stated that he was of the Church of England religion. His physical description on enlistment was that he was 5 feet 8 inches in height and he had brown eyes and fair hair.

Peter Allom served as a Stoker Class 2 at the training establishment, H.M.A.S. Cerberus in Victoria during the period 10th December 1934 until 14th July 1935. He then served as a Stoker Class 2 on the heavy cruiser, H.M.A.S. Canberra during the period 15th July 1935 until 9th December 1935 when he was appointed to the rank of Stoker. He was appointed an Acting Leading Stoker on 31st

December 1937 and Leading Stoker on 31st December 1938. He continued to serve on the heavy cruiser, H.M.A.S. Canberra until 25th February 1938.  He joined the heavy cruiser, H.M.A.S. Australia on 26th February 1938 and was a member of its crew until 26th April 1938.  He joined the crew of the submarine depot ship, H.M.A.S. Penguin on 27th April 1938 and served on its crew until 29th September 1938 when he transferred to the destroyer, H.M.A.S. Vendetta.  He rejoined the submarine depot ship, H.M.A.S. Penguin on 11th November 1938 and served with the ship until 12th March 1939 when he was transferred to the light cruiser, H.M.A.S. Adelaide for the period 13th March until 25th April 1939.  He served on the submarine depot ship, H.M.A.S. Penguin during the period 26th April until 18th May 1939. He travelled to England on the ship "Autolycus" from Melbourne in Victoria on 20th May 1939 for the commissioning and subsequent crewing of H.M.A.S. Perth. Whilst en route to Australia, "Perth" was used to represent Australia at the 1939 New York World's Fair.  After leaving New York on 21st August 1939, the "Perth" served for six months in the Carribean where it was based at Kingston in Jamaica with the West Indies Squadron.  It escorted ships into the Atlantic Ocean and helped prevent German ships from leaving port.  It arrived back in Sydney on 31st March 1940 and began patrolling Australian waters, before being sent to the Mediterranean at the end of 1940 where it was involved in the Battle of Matapan and the evacuation of Greece and Crete, before returning to Australia on 12th August 1941.

It was whilst he was serving on the "Perth" in the Mediterranean that Leading Stoker Peter Allom was awarded the British Empire Medal for his bravery at the Valetta Dockyard in Malta on 16th January 1941.  An account of the action that led to his award is contained on pages 56-57 of Kathryn Spurling's book, "Cruel Conflict – The triumph and tragedy of H.M.A.S. Perth", New Holland Publishers, Sydney, 2008.  He was a Leading Stoker and member of the crew of the ship H.M.A.S. Perth that came under aerial attack from German dive bombers.  Next to the Perth was the merchant ship the Essex that was loaded with 4000 tons of ammunition.  The Essex took a direct hit and was set alight.  A fire party from the Perth rapidly deployed to the blazing merchantman.  Peter Allom realised the fire was inaccessible from the first angle of attack and struggled with an unwieldy hose until the water was directed through a smashed porthole thereby extinguishing the fire before it reached the magazine.  He and two other members of the fire party were awarded British Empire Medals for their skill and determination in attacking the fire through the ships portholes, which they smashed as necessary, thus preventing it from spreading to its dangerous cargo. All the men who comprised the fire party that succeeded in extinguishing the blaze on the Essex had volunteered to carry out this hazardous enterprise.  In an extraordinary coincidence, another Toowoomba sailor Stoker Percy "Bluey" Larmer, who was a dairy worker before he enlisted, was also a member of the fire party and he too was awarded the British Empire Medal.

Peter Allom was a crewmember of the light cruiser, H.M.A.S. Perth until it was torpedoed and sunk by Japanese naval forces during the battle in the Sunda Straits of Indonesia on 1st March 1942.  Peter Allom and 352 crewmembers of the Perth's complement of 682 men were lost at sea.  Peter Allom was 26 years of age at the time of his death.  He lost his life at sea, therefore his name is commemorated on the Plymouth Memorial for the missing in England.  His name is recorded on Panel No. 5 at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and it is commemorated locally on the Toowoomba Mothers' Memorial, the Toowoomba Soldiers' Memorial Hall World War 2 Honour Board and the Toowoomba Grammar School World War 2 Honour Board.

**Notes:**

Peter Allom's father George was born at Clifton near Toowoomba and he was educated at the Toowoomba Grammar School. He worked in Toowoomba prior to going to Malaya. He died on 20th August 1940 and he is buried in the Drayton & Toowoomba Cemetery. His wife was subsequently interred there also.

Peter's cousin, Private Walter George Allom, served overseas with the 49th Infantry Battalion during World War 2 and he was killed in action at Sanananda.

Leading Stoker Peter Allom is shown as having passed the educational test part one on 26th March 1935. He was granted his first good conduct badge on 12th February 1937. Peter Allom married Moya Jean Burgess at Balmain in Sydney in 1941. Leading Stoker Peter Allom was awarded a British Empire Medal for his bravery and devotion to duty in boarding and fighting a fire on a burning mercantile marine vessel. The award of the British Empire Medal was promulgated in the London Gazette on 5th August 1941. At the request of Peter, the award was presented to his wife by Rear-Admiral G.C. Muirhead-Gould, D.S.C., at H.M.A.S. "Rushcutter" on 27th May 1942.
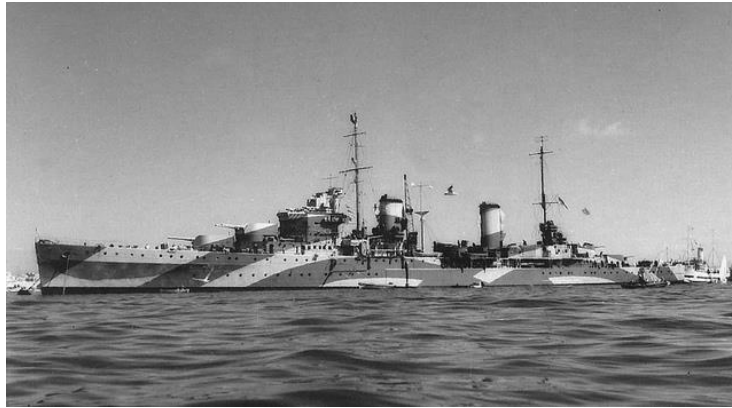
A detailed history of H.M.A.S. Perth during World War 2 can be found in Mike Carlton's publication "Cruiser – The Life and Loss of H.M.A.S. Perth and Her Crew". William Heinemann Australia, Random House Australia, North Sydney, 2010. ISBN 978 1 74166 839

An account of his actions that led to the award of the British Empire Medal and the circumstances of his death when the "Perth" was torpedoed is contained in Kathryn Spurling's book, "Cruel Conflict – The Triumph and Tragedy of H.M.A.S. Perth", New Holland Publishers, Sydney. 2008.

Seven crew members of HMAS Perth are recorded on the Toowoomba Mothers' Memorial:- Leading Stoker Peter Allom, Able Seaman Geoffrey Blinco, Leading Stoker Percy Larmer and Yeoman of Signals Percy Stokan all lost their lives when the ship was sunk. Leading Seaman William Cowdroy died whilst a prisoner of war in Thailand, and Able Seaman Paul Doneley and Steward Robert Smith both died whilst prisoners-of-war in Burma.

Toowoomba Grammar School archive records show that he enrolled as a day student on 3rd February 1930 and that he left the School on 4th December 1932. His parent was shown as Mr George Allom, Phillip Street, Toowoomba. The School Magazine of May 1915 states that George Allom wrote to the school, '*One of the few who had actually seen service before the Dardanelles landing is George Allom, who writes from Tampin, Malay States : "The regiment of 80 volunteers to which I belong was ordered to Singapore for a month's training, and to help guard the prisoners of war. We had been in camp about a week when we were called up one morning and were told the 5th Light Infantry-a native regiment of 900 men-had mutinied. We were under fire the whole afternoon and next day and several times afterwards. I was sent back for ammunition and the bullets were flying all around me. It was marvellous how I escaped. Two men of my regiment were killed and one wounded. There is not the least doubt that the natives intended to murder us while we were asleep, but it is all over now. It was an experience for us that we don't want repeated. I could write a lot more but the censor might get told of it."*

**HMAS Perth in Alexandria in May 1941.**



**External Links**
View on Australian War Memorial
View Military Records